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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9841
INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE
RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE 0208
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2470
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 5887
RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA 1310
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 2659
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 KABUL 001887

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SA/FO, SA/A, S/CR, EUR/RPM
NSC FOR AMEND AND HARRIMAN
OSD FOR BREZEZINSKI
REL NATO/AUST/NZ/ISAF
CENTCOM FOR CG CFC-A, CG CJTF-76

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958 N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [AF](#)
SUBJECT: PRT/BAMYAN: KHALILI SUPPORTERS MUDDY
POLITICAL WATERS IN BAMYAN

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Summary

1. (SBU) The supporters of Second Vice President Khalili are playing political hardball, and Governor Sarabi appears to be their target. Minority Tajik unrest, which has received tacit backing from Khalili stalwarts, appears designed to discredit the Governor. The recent appointment of a crony of former Governor Aliyar as Deputy Chief of Police and Governor Sarabi's recent meeting with President Karzai only bolster the perception of her isolation. Sarabi has a tough hand to play, and is in sore need of some recognizable wins to counter the notion that she cannot deliver improvements to the lives of Bamyans people. Sarabi is looking to donors, especially the US, to deliver those wins. End Summary.

Minority Tajik Complaints Fuel for Political In-Fighting

2. (SBU) Tajik grumblings about their treatment at the hands of the Hazara are being heard all the way to Kabul. Aide-de-camp to Governor Habiba Sarabi Mr. Amir Fooladi explained to PRToff on April 18 that such complaints are seasonal, peaking in the spring when unresolved disputes over scarce arable land come to the fore. This year, however, rather than simply expressing such views privately, a number of Bamyani Tajiks have traveled to Kabul to air their grievances. Fooladi noted that the Bamyani Tajiks had even met with Speaker of Parliament Qanooni to complain about Tajik

treatment at the hands of local officials (almost exclusively Hazara). Fooladi surmised that these complaints are centered on Governor Sarabi.

Khalili Behind Effort to Undermine Governor?

13. (SBU) Surprisingly, Second Vice President Abdul Karim Khalili (ethnic Hazara) appears to be the source of support for these complaints. Fooladi confided that Khalili had met with the Tajik agitators earlier in the month to hear their complaints. Fooladi went further, claiming that Khalili had promised the Tajiks that he would support a Tajik as Governor of Bamyan, should the current rumor campaign succeed in removing Sarabi. Fooladi would not comment whether the current rumor campaign prompted President Karzais last minute request for a meeting with Gov. Sarabi on April 16, but did admit that it likely would be discussed.

Governor Sarabis Back Against the Wall

14. (SBU) Even before her first day on the job in March 2005, Governor Sarabi had three strikes against her, as a well-placed international source explained. One, she is a woman, the only woman governor in the country. Two, she is originally from Ghazni, and thus not a true Hazara in some circles. Three, her appointment took down someone well-connected to local political machinery. (Note: Khalili reportedly is a strong supporter of Aliyar -- both are from Yakawlang district -- and opposed Sarabis appointment.)

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Fooladi said that President Karzai has offered Sarabi an Ambassadorship as a graceful exit if and when she chooses to exercise it, but that she had turned it down. She wants to show her doubters that a woman can succeed as governor in Afghanistan, he explained.

Re-Appointment of Dep. Chief of Police Boosts Khalili

15. (SBU) The return of Abdul Rahman to his previous position as Deputy Chief of Police does not appear to help Sarabi shore up her position. Rahman, a close friend of Aliyar and VP Khalili, reclaimed his position from former Dep. Chief of Police Abdul Malik on April 18. Malik's removal had been long forecast, as MOI Embedded PRT Representative General Ali told PRToff in December that Malik's role in corruption, as well as his abuse of alcohol and minors, made him unfit for his position.

16. (SBU) Rahman's return, however, was not expected. We thought he and his corrupt friends were gone for good, the head of the regional Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission complained. Malik was bad, but Rahman is not much better. (FYI: Rahman told us he stepped down voluntarily to run for the Wolesi Jirga. Rahman received a relatively large number of votes, 5410, although not sufficient to claim one of Bamyan's four WJ seats. End FYI.) General Ali expressed his disappointment that someone so corrupt could get a second chance. (Note: Rahman was implicated in a string of burglaries in the Bamyan bazaar. His involvement in a diesel/petrol siphoning ring that stole so much fuel that Rahman opened his own service station in Kabul reportedly is what led

to his initial dismissal. End Note.)

17. (SBU) Many contacts interpreted Rahmans re-appointment as a boost to Khalili, and a knock on Sarabis efforts as governor. He (Rahman) will not make it any easier for her (Sarabi), said a local contractor. Perhaps Karzai is losing faith in her, the head of the Shaidan District shura wondered. ANP Colonel Timor Shah predicted that Sarabi would soon move on: she has no friends left in Bamyān (government); why would she stay?

Comment: Looking to Donors for a Boost

18. (SBU) Governor Sarabi has put herself in harms way for her beliefs and ideas in the past, especially during the Taliban era when she crossed the Afghan-Pakistan border regularly at night to teach in clandestine womens schools against Taliban edicts. Her concern for Bamyāns people (at least its Hazara majority) appears genuine. It thus seems unlikely that she would give up her position as governor without a struggle, or at least an explicit request from Karzai.

19. (SBU) Sarabis grace period as Bamyān Governor appears to be over, however, especially now that VP Khalili appears to be consolidating his ethnic power base in the Hazarajat. Her isolation within the local political scene may explain her full court press with donors to commit to the ambitious but vague future

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development plan for Bamyān City. The US, which had at various times committed to three large-scale infrastructure projects for Bamyān (a police training center, a courthouse, and a provincial administrative building) remains a favorite target for her infrastructure requests. Until these projects and others are built, Sarabi will have few examples to which she can point as proof of her success in garnering resources for Bamyāns people. Sarabis position thus may continue to weaken, an unfortunate development for Afghanistan's only woman governor.

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